

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03

NSC-10 PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /136 W

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6312

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS UNN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 0444

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, ILO, ICFTU, XG

SUBJECT: DGB LEADER DISCUSSED EAST-WEST TRADE UNION MEETING

REF: GENEVA 6800

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: GERMAN DGB LEADER ALFONS LAPPAS HAS DESCRIBED THE EAST-WEST TRADE UNION MEETING AT GENEVA LAST WEEK AS A SOVIET COUP WHICH POSES A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. HE SAID THAT IN LIGHT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AMONG NON- COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONS IS IMPERATIVE. LAPPAS LAMENTED THE CONTINUED ABSENCE OF THE AFL-CIO FROM THE ICFTU. HE
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EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE AFL-CIO WILL CONSIDER RE-

EVALUATING ITS POLICIES VIS-A-VIS THE ICFTU AND EUROPE
IN THE CONTEXT OF A DRAMATICALLY CHANGED SITUATION. END
SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 23 DGB TRASURER ALFONS LAPPAS, WHO IS ALSO
PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE OF THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY, TOLD THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE THAT THE JANUARY 19
EAST-WEST TRADE UNION MEETING AT GENEVA WAS AN UNQUALIFIED
SUCCESS FOR THE SOVIETS. HE SAID ANY WEST EUROPEAN TRADE
UNION LEADERS WHO VIEW THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING IN OTHER
TERMS ARE DELUDING THEMSELVES. THE SOLE SOVIET OBJECTIVE
AT GENEVA HE SAID, WAS TO SECURE A WESTERN COMMITMENT TO MEET
AGAIN IN THE FUTURE. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED. REGARDLESS OF
AGREEMENTS REACHED AT GENEVA LIMITING DISCUSSIONS AT A FUTURE
EAST-WEST MEETING TO SO-CALLED TECHNICAL AREAS, LAPPAS IS
CONVINCED THAT IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE SOVIETS
BEGIN MAKING POLITICAL INROADS IN THE WEST EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC
LABOR MOVEMENT.

3. LAPPAS MADE A POINT OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN BILATERAL
CONTACTS WITH THE EAST, WHICH THE GERMANS HAVE ADVOCATED, AND
MULTILATERAL CONFERENCES WHICH COULD LEAD TO ORGANIC TIES AND
INCREASED SOVIET INVOLVMENT IN THE WEST EUROPEAN LABOR
MOVEMENT. HE ALS EMPHASIZED THAT HIS VIEWS MAY DIFFER
WITH THOSE OF SOME DGB LEADERS (HE DID NOT SPECIFY WHOM)
BUT COINCIDED WITH THE VIEWS OF AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY
OF GERMAN TRADE UNION LEADERS.

4. LAPPAS GRIMLY DESCRIBED THE EAST-WEST MEETING AS A
SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT FOR SOVIET DIPLOMACY. HE SAID
SHELEPIN AND THE SOVIET LABOR ORGANIZATION AUCCTU HAVE
SUCCESSFULLY EXPLOITED DETENTE IN THE EUROPEAN
TRADE UNION FIELD.

5. LAPPAS FEELS THAT THE NEED FOR SOLIDARITY IN THE
FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS NOW GREATER THAN EVER. HE
BELIEVES THE ICFTU MUST BE STRENGTHENED IF THE WEST IS TO
COUNTERACT SOVIET INITIATIVES AND CONSIDERS THE CONTINUED
ABSENCE OF THE AFL-CIO FROM THE ICFTU AS A SERIOUS OBSTACLE
TO ACHIEVING THIS. LAPPAS TOLD US THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT
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THE AFL-CIO CONSIDER REEVALUATING ITS POSITION IN THE CONTEXT
OF A DRAMATICALLY CHANGED SITUATION. WITHOUT THE PRESENCE
OF THE AFL-CIO IN THE ICFTU, HE CONTENTS, THE ABILITY OF THE DGB AND
OTHER LIKEMINDED NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTERS TO REVERSE PRESENT
TRENDS IS RENDERED INFINITELY MORE DIFFICULT.

6. COMMENT: THE MEETING WITH THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE
WAS REQUESTED BY LAPPAS. THE CONVERSATION SEEMED TO BE

PURPOSELY LIMITED BY LAPPAS TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JANUARY 19 EAST-WEST MEETING, THE THREAT IT POSES TO THE FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND THE NEED FOR A CHANGE IN AFL-CIO POLICY REGARDING THE ICFTU. IF LAPPAS' ASSESSMENT IS IN FACT GENERALLY SHARED AMONG GERMAN TRADE UNION LEADERS, THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT COULD PROVIDE A NEW IMPETUS AND SCOPE TO DGB EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH CLOSER RAPPORT WITH THE AFL-CIO. LAPPAS' CONCERN OVER THE CONTINUED ABSENCE OF THE AFL-CIO FROM THE ICFTU IS SHARED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF WEST EUROPEAN TRADE UNION LEADERS. THEY MAY NOT ALWAYS AGREE WITH AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL POLICIES BUT THEY REALIZE THE SOVIET THRUST IN WESTERN EUROPE MUST BE COUNTER-BALANCED AND THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE AMERICANS IN THE ICFTU WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE THEIR PROSPECTS FOR DOING SO. GREENWALD

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